

Group Assets

The Newsletter of the
Group Foundation
for Advancing Mental Health

Winter 2016

The Passing of the Torch

Connie Concannon, LCSW, CGP, DFAGPA, Editor, Group Assets

The Group Foundation for Advancing Mental Health has flourished in large part due to the dedicated leadership that has nurtured and energized the spirit of contribution within our membership. We know that a successful group needs a well-trained leader who brings in his or her unique qualities. We have been blessed with gifted group therapists who have used their personal and professional skills in leading the Foundation's significant growth.

As we pass the torch of leadership, Phyllis Cohen, PhD, PsyD, CGP, LFAGPA, Outgoing Chair, Jeffrey Hudson, MEd, LPC, CGP, FAGPA, Vice Chair, and Karen Travis, MSW, LCSW, CGP, FAGPA, Incoming Chair, reflect about serving the Foundation. I want to take this opportunity to thank them for their willingness to take on this mammoth job, strengthening the viability of AGPA and the Certification Board through their work on the Foundation. Cohen reflected...

"My term as Chair of the Foundation has been a relatively short one. Through my eyes there have been progressive changes, even more if I go back to the earlier time when Marsha Block, CAE, CFRE, AGPA's CEO recruited me.



Phyllis Cohen

"When I joined the Foundation Board, I was interested in the Scholarship Program. At the time, we awarded very few, less than 50; it was all we could afford. This past year, a record 216 scholarships were awarded.

"What changed? Over the years, our Foundation has become more cohesive, generous, and aware that the true value of philanthropy is that in giving we are really getting. We are able to put more out there for education, community work, and disaster/trauma aid, as well as our scholarships. Along with that, we are better able to value ourselves for the work that is done.

"Another change is that we have many younger leaders stepping forward. They bring new energy, creative ideas, sources for members, and ways of raising the monies we need. And they are fun, as leaders should be.

"I see an increased respect for the Foundation by other professional organizations. The Group Analytic Society International in London, for example, established a foundation based on our model. People tell me that we are admired, imitated, and even envied. Of course, none of these could be done without our phenomenal staff.

"The Foundation simply gets better and better. I am so proud to have served as Chair of a group whose primary purpose is advancing mental health. I cherish all who have been with me on this journey of growth."

Phyllis' statement reflects the passion and commitment that she has brought to the Chairmanship and the Board. We owe her a great deal of gratitude for what was accomplished during her tenure.

Jeff Hudson served as the Vice Chair, and we are delighted that he will continue in this role with Karen.

"The Foundation Board was recently asked to reflect on their primary motivations for supporting the group. Every member, including me, identified the Scholarship Program and our desire to ensure the future of expert training in group psychotherapy.

"While the Education and Scholarship Program allows recipients to receive training, be inspired, and connect with the larger clinical world, less known are its benefits to the Annual Meeting, Affiliate Societies, leadership development, and the personal satisfaction that comes with supporting something you believe in. The program increases the diversity of the Annual Meeting, with recipients who have varied professional and personal backgrounds, and who bring knowledge and perspectives that enrich the learning experience for all participants. Our Scholarship Program also nurtures the next generation of group leaders and future officers for our local and national organizations. The Scholarship Program is also an opportunity to give back to a field that we really believe in.

"Another inspiration for my involvement is the satisfaction that comes from collaborating with Board members and local societies in planning fundraising events. Fundraising committees across the country have been creative and generous in hosting public education events, receptions, and fundraisers. While initially these events were created to educate the public about the work of AGPA and the Foundation, they are also wonderful opportunities to educate non-clinicians about the power of group therapy to change lives, heal trauma, and improve communication and relationship skills.

"The generosity of my fellow AGPA members is a constant source of inspiration. When I joined the Foundation Board in 2006, the leaders had set a goal of creating a culture of giving within AGPA. I have been moved to see members, ranging from previous scholarship recipients to senior clinicians, regularly contribute to the Group Foundation. Their generosity inspires me to find, and act from, my own generosity."

Jeff's warmth and enthusiasm is contagious, and we are lucky to have someone that is highly effective and a joy to work with.

Karen Travis, incoming Chair, has been a prominent leader in AGPA, serving in many leadership positions and running for President in the last election.

"When I did not win the AGPA presidency, I was disappointed but knew I would find other ways to serve. At the time, I was already a Foundation Board Member and Chair of the Scholarship and Awards Committee.

"While there is always a need for well-trained, mental health practitioners, it seems so much more vital in our world today. I love the work and am committed to fundraising on the Foundation's behalf.

"I was very surprised when I was asked to consider becoming the Foundation's Chair. One reason was that, while I knew I had much to give in time, effort, devotion, blood, sweat and perhaps on some days tears, I didn't have the financial ability to give at the level I thought was expected of the Chair. I was gratified to learn that this isn't the primary consideration when choosing leadership candidates.



Jeffrey Hudson



Karen Travis

Continued on back

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